

**Custom Report Excerpts**

# Philippines

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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### Women

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**Rape and Domestic Violence:** Rape, including spousal rape, is illegal, with penalties ranging from 12 to 40 years' imprisonment with pardon or parole possible only after 30 years' imprisonment. Conviction can also result in a lifetime ban from political office. Penalties for forcible sexual assault range from six to 12 years' imprisonment, but difficulty in obtaining convictions remained a challenge for effective enforcement. The Department of Social Welfare and Development provided shelter, counseling, and health services to female survivors of rape. There continued to be reports of rape and sexual abuse of women in police or protective custody.

Domestic violence against women remained a serious and widespread problem. The law criminalizes physical, sexual, and psychological harm or abuse to women and children committed by their spouses, partners, or parents. Penalties depend on the severity of the crime and may include imprisonment or fines. From January to June, the Department of Social Welfare assisted 199,218 women categorized as "women in especially difficult circumstances." Of these, the great majority of cases involved physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, and the number included 1,434 female victims of trafficking in persons. The department also assisted many women with disabilities and female victims of other abuses, including emotional and economic battery. As of June the PNP reported 15,742 cases of domestic violence against women and children. Statistics were unavailable on prosecutions, convictions, and punishments for cases filed by the PNP. The PNP-Directorate for Police Community Relations conducted three orientation seminars in March and July entitled "Men Opposed to Violence Against Women Everywhere" with 100 participants from different police units.

NGOs noted that, in smaller localities, perpetrators of abuse sometimes used personal relationships with local authorities to avoid prosecution.

The PNP and the Department of Social Welfare both maintained help desks to assist survivors of violence against women and encourage reporting. With the assistance of NGOs, the CHR, and the Philippine Commission on Women, law enforcement officers continued to receive gender sensitivity training to deal with victims of sexual crimes and domestic violence. The PNP maintained a women and children's unit with 1,918 desks throughout the country to deal with abuse cases. The PNP increased the number of personnel assigned to these Women and Children Protection Desks because of their increased responsibilities for handling trafficking cases; 4,576 officers were assigned to the desks nationwide, almost 98 percent of them women.

**Sexual Harassment:** The law prohibits sexual harassment, and violations are punishable by imprisonment of not less than one month and not more than six months, and/or a fine of not less than 10,000 pesos (\$200) and not more than 20,000 pesos (\$400). But sexual harassment remained widespread and underreported, including in the workplace, due to victims' fear of losing their jobs.

**Coercion in Population Control:** There were no reports of coerced abortion, involuntary sterilization, or other coercive population

control methods. Estimates on maternal mortality and contraceptive prevalence are available at:

[www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality-2015/en/](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality-2015/en/).

Discrimination: In law but not always in practice, women have most of the rights and protections accorded to men, and the law seeks to eliminate discrimination against women. The law accords women the same property rights as men. In Muslim and indigenous communities, however, property ownership law or tradition grant men more property rights than women.

In March the CHR denied a motion for reconsideration submitted by President Duterte related to its 2016 finding that the words and actions of then president-elect Duterte violated the law. The CHR found that Duterte's joke during the presidential campaign about the rape and murder of an Australian citizen was in violation of the law because it amounted to violence against women. In accordance with the law, the CHR called on the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Interior and Local Government to recommend appropriate sanctions.

No law mandates nondiscrimination based on gender in hiring, although the law prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. Nonetheless, women continued to face discrimination on the job as well as in hiring (see section 7.d.).

The law does not provide for divorce. Legal annulments and separation are possible, and courts generally recognized foreign divorces if one of the parties is a foreigner. These options, however, are costly, complex, and not readily available to the poor. The Office of the Solicitor General is required to oppose requests for annulment under the constitution. Informal separation is common, but brings with it potential legal and financial problems. Muslims have the right to divorce under Muslim family law.